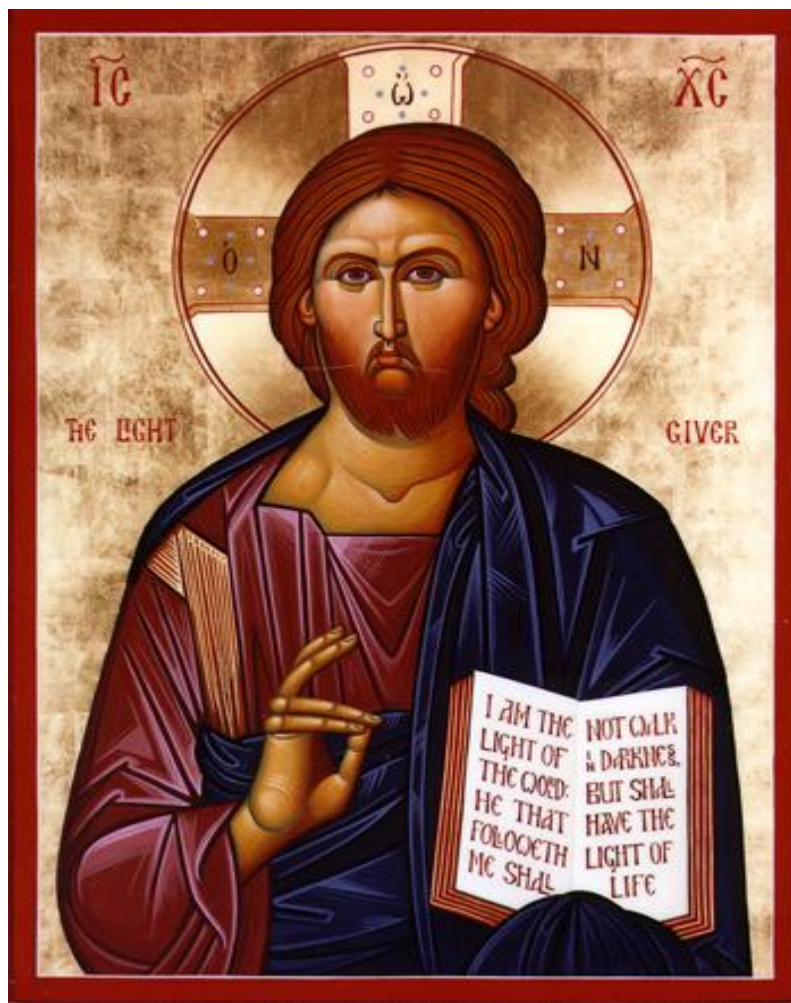


# ST. CECILIA CHURCH PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION

2022-2023

## FAMILY HANDBOOK



**SAINT CECILIA PARISH  
PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION  
2022-2023**

**Pastor** Reverend Nicola D. Ventura

**Director** Lee Ann Breeze  
(614) 878-5353  
[lbreeze@ceciliachurch.org](mailto:lbreeze@ceciliachurch.org)

**Class times** Sundays: 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.

**Telephone numbers**

Parish Office (weekdays) (614) 878-5353  
School Office (during class time) (614) 878-3555

**Catechists**

|                                             |                                 |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Preschool/Kindergarten                      | Mia Eberts                      |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade CGS | Julie Cheatham, Mary Ann Scholl |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade                       | Jennifer Doggett                |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade                       | Hydie Shiplet                   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade                       | JoAnn Kennedy                   |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade                       | Warren & Joann Wright           |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade                       | Gary Helmink                    |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade                       | Rick Logue                      |

# SAINT CECILIA CHURCH PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION GENERAL OVERVIEW

THE MISSION OF OUR RELIGION PROGRAM IS FIVE-FOLD:

- 1) To proclaim the Gospel*
- 2) To help our children grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ*
- 3) To participate in efforts toward building up the Body of Christ*
- 4) To lead children to worship and prayer*
- 5) To motivate children to live the Christian life in service to others*

St. Cecilia's Religious Education Program is a Catholic environment where your children can learn about our Catholic faith. The full program includes:

- ✓ Basic truths of the faith and basic beliefs of the Catholic Church
- ✓ Prayers of the Catholic Tradition
- ✓ The Sacraments; their meaning, symbols and signs; their effect in our lives and the life of the Church
- ✓ A history of the Church; the marks of the Church; the structure of the Church, and the heroes of the Church (our "Saints")
- ✓ Sacred Scripture – both the Hebrew Scripture (Old Testament) and Christian Scripture (New Testament)
- ✓ Classroom instruction for the Sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation
- ✓ Primary instructional materials for the academic year
- ✓ A Religious Education Staff dedicated to the faith formation of each child.

Grade Levels: Religious Education Classes are available for preschoolers (must be at least 4 years old by September 1 of the enrollment year) through those entering eighth grade. Children should attend the same grade level in PSR as they do in public school.

\*\* ALL students enrolling in our sacramental preparation grades (second and eighth) must have previously attended a full year of first or seventh grade Catholic religious instruction, respectively. This could be done in either a Catholic elementary school or a Parish School of Religion (PSR) Program. Any child who has not received the previous year's instruction will need to enroll in first or seventh grade in the fall, and complete second or eighth grade next year.

# SAINT CECILIA CHURCH PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION PROGRAMS & CURRICULUM

## PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

Students in preschool and kindergarten will attend a ‘traditional’ PSR class each week. The students will use the *Christ Our Life: God Loves Us* text published by Loyola Press. Developed specifically for ages 4-6, this program, written by the Sisters of Notre Dame, fosters children’s love of God and guides them toward a life of discipleship. Class time will provide children with a thorough presentation of the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church and will match their ability to learn complex concepts when presented in ways that are friendly and proven to work with four-to-six-year-olds. With active-learning opportunities during every class, students will be engaged and fully immersed in the rich content of their Catholic faith.

## GRADES 1 & 2

Students in grades 1 & 2 will take part in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program (CGS). This 2-year program is the faith formation curriculum for students to prepare for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and Eucharist. CGS originated in 1954 with the founding of the children’s center or “atrium” in Rome. Inspired by the Montessori Principles of Education, it now extends into many countries. CGS is based on the understanding that God and the child are already in relationship. The child has a deep need to experience and a special capacity to enjoy the presence of God. The task of the adult is to help the child live fully the encounter with God. When helped to do so, this experience becomes formative in the child’s whole person and generates great joy. The curriculum is constructed so that it accommodates and nurtures faith and moral developmental stages of the child’s growth. The themes are offered in such a way as to encourage the religious potential present in every child: the capacity to love and be loved.

The atrium is one of the elements that help the relationship between God and the child flourish. The atrium is the environment where this formation takes place. In the early church, the atrium was a place where the catechumens were prepared. For the child, too, the atrium is a place of preparation for involvement in the larger worshipping community. To learn more about CGS visit: [www.cgsusa.org](http://www.cgsusa.org).

## GRADES 3 – 7

Students in grades 3 through 7 will attend ‘traditional’ PSR classes each week. The students will use the *Christ Our Life* student book published by Loyola Press. Each grade level’s text is created with the goal of teaching children that Jesus is the one around whom our lives are centered. It teaches children how to live out their faith in their daily lives and in communion with the Church. Through scripture, doctrine, and prayer, children are guided into a deeper personal relationship with Christ.

## GRADE 8

Our 8th graders will be using *Decision Point* by Dynamic Catholic. This faith formation program is centered on helping prepare our teens, not only for the Sacrament of Confirmation, but also how to live a Christ-centric life beyond. This program was developed to engage young Catholics in a meaningful conversation about the genius of Catholicism. It teaches and inspires teens to respond to God’s grace. Throughout the year, teens will engage in a meaningful conversation about Catholicism to help equip them to live out their faith long after their Confirmation. It transforms the classroom experience for teachers and encourages parents with its practical yet profound messages. It’s truly making a difference. To read more about Decision Point, go to: <https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/confirmation/decision-point.html>.

**SAINT CECILIA CHURCH  
PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION  
GENERAL INFORMATION**

**PARISH REGISTRATION**

The parents (or guardians) of any student enrolling in our Religious Education Program are expected to be registered, active, and participating members of the parish. Approval to attend the program may be granted to members of other Roman Catholic parishes, with the prior consent of the Pastors and/or Directors of Religious Education from both parishes. Contact the parish office at (614) 878-5353 if you need to register your family in the parish.

**MASS ATTENDANCE**

The celebration of Mass is the center of our Catholic faith and parish life, and therefore vital to the education and Christian formation of our children. PSR families should make attending Mass every weekend and on Holy Days their first priority. What we do in PSR supplements what you do by taking them to Mass each week and living the faith in your domestic church – the church of the family. Time in the atrium and classroom is meant to help our children to make connections between the Bible, the sacred liturgy of the Mass and to their daily life. If they are not taken to Mass regularly, their time with us becomes frustrating at best and meaningless at worst. PSR is meant to enhance participation in Mass and should never replace it.

Our PSR sessions are aligned to immediately follow the 9:30 Mass and just prior to the Noon Mass. We encourage you to attend Mass together as a family and then send your children to PSR. Family participation in Mass should be prioritized over all aspects of modern life, including after school programs, sports, and family obligations. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Christian life. This is what we preach; this is what we practice.

**CLASS REGISTRATION**

Registration for all PSR classes for the upcoming school year opens in April each year. Registrations can be completed online on our parish website ([www.saintceciliachurch.org](http://www.saintceciliachurch.org)). Cost is \$75 per student if registration is completed by May 30<sup>th</sup>. After May 30<sup>th</sup>, cost per student is \$90. Registrations will not be considered complete until class fees are paid. Fees can be paid by cash, check, or online through Faith Direct [www.faith.direct/OH857](http://www.faith.direct/OH857). Tuition assistance is available, if needed. Fees are not refundable. All registrations must be completed by the first Sunday in October. Late registrations will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Copies of baptismal certificates are required at the time of registration for all students who were not baptized at St. Cecilia Church. Please see the information on Sacramental preparation programs later in this handbook if your child still needs to be baptized.

**PARENT INFORMATION SESSION**

Parents (or another family adult) are asked to attend a PSR Parent Information Session on the first Sunday morning of PSR classes in the Fall in the Parish Center (Gym) at 10:45 am. Students will be introduced to their teachers and then proceed to their classrooms. Parents are asked to remain for a brief meeting.

If there is a split in custody agreement or another family situation in which another household is involved, and you wish the other person(s) to receive our family handbook and other information please provide us with the name and address.

# **SAINT CECILIA CHURCH PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION CLASSROOM POLICIES**

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

In compliance with Diocesan policy, all PSR staff and volunteers who have care and custody of youth must have on file a current Bureau of Criminal Investigation criminal background check and must attend the “Protecting God’s Children” workshop.

## **PARENTAL PARTICIPATION**

Parents are welcome to participate and be present in all activities for children and youth sponsored by the parish. Parents participating in activities involving other children must first meet the Save Environment criteria listed above. While efforts should be made to create an environment where children and youth are comfortable expressing themselves, “...the right and duty of the parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable.” (CCC 2221) Parents should never be denied the right to observe programs in which their children participate. For more details about completing a BCI check and/or registering for a “Protecting God’s Workshop,” contact the parish office at (614) 878-5353. Parents are encouraged to volunteer in their child’s classroom or other classes. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the program coordinator or parish office.

## **CLASSROOM VISITORS**

In an effort to provide the best religious education possible, it is important to keep the integrity of the classroom. For this reason, we do not permit friends, relatives, or neighbors to accompany students to class. Parents, as stated above, are always welcome.

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Since there are a very limited number of classes available in a school year, students are expected to be in attendance for at least 90% of the scheduled class days. Faith formation should be a higher priority than sports or other activities. Only 3 unexcused absences will be permitted per school year. If a student has more than 3 unexcused absences, the student may be asked to repeat the grade the following year.

Should an excusable need arise for a student to miss class, such as for illness, our catechists are most willing to provide a lesson plan for the student to complete at home with the parents, and return to the teacher the following week. When the work is completed, the student will be given credit for the missed class. Please contact the PSR Director or the child’s teacher before the start of class to inform them of the reason for the absence. Excused absences that are followed up with a completed ‘at-home’ lesson will not count against your child’s 90% participation.

Students are asked to arrive in their classrooms on time, and remain in class the entire hour. If a family situation occurs and there is a need for your child to arrive late or leave class early, please send a written notice on that day with your child.

## **WEATHER CLOSING**

If there is a snow day or other emergency occurrence which results in the cancellation of our classes, the catechist (religion teacher) will inform the families who have students in his/her class. Cancellations will also be posted on our parish website ([www.saintceciliachurch.org](http://www.saintceciliachurch.org)) and the parish Facebook page.

## **SHARED CLASSROOM SPACE**

The PSR classrooms are shared spaces with St. Cecilia Elementary School students. Children in both programs are expected to respect the property and personal items of other individuals. Each program will provide the necessary supplies needed for their respective classes.

## **ST. CECILIA SPORTS ELIGIBILITY**

Because the St. Cecilia athletic teams are parish teams, children attending PSR classes are eligible to play. Diocesan athletics are offered for students in grades 4 through 8. Because our relationship with Jesus Christ and our knowledge of his teaching is the very reason we exist as Church, the religious education of our children should take priority over any secular event. Therefore, attendance at religion classes is a prerequisite to a student's eligibility to participate in sports at St. Cecilia. To maintain their eligibility, they must have attended at least 90% of the PSR classes in the previous trimester. Attendance at spring classes is used to determine eligibility for fall sports; and that of fall classes for winter sports in the same year, etc. The overall attendance for the previous year is also checked. Per Diocesan policy, any teams which use ineligible players can forfeit all games in which they participate.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS**

As our classrooms are shared space with St. Cecilia School, we ask that no unnecessary personal items be brought to class. It is the responsibility of the child to take any items home which were brought to class each day. If an item is accidentally left in the classroom, please call (614) 878-5353 from 9 am – 4 pm weekdays to inquire about it.

Please do not send your child to class with items of value. The use of any electronic devices, including cell phones, gaming devices, headphones, and earbuds, are prohibited while in class. If a child needs to place a call to family members, they may use the phone in the school office. Cell phones are a major distraction and temptation for students. If parents need to reach a child during class times, there is always someone in the school office to assist you. When necessary, please call the school office at (614) 878-3555.

## **CLASSROOM ATTIRE**

Students should be dressed appropriately for religious education classes. Inappropriate language or graphics printed on the student's clothing is not allowed. Overly exposed skin is also not permitted.

## **SNACKS**

The students in our Religious Education Program have just one hour a week of instruction. Because of this very short time, we feel that it is vital to devote as much of our time as possible to providing instruction. For this reason, we do not provide weekly snacks during our religion classes. The Liturgical celebrations of Christmas and Easter will be celebrated in the classrooms and treats may be enjoyed at these times. Food, beverages, and gum are not allowed in the classroom except for planned occasions. Students are allowed bottled water, but please no other drinks, even those with lids. If your child has a condition that would call for supplemental nourishment that would affect the time he or she is in class, please email Lee Ann Breeze at [lbreeze@ceciliachurch.org](mailto:lbreeze@ceciliachurch.org)

## **DISCIPLINE**

We continue to be impressed with the quality of young people we have in our parish. We strive for an atmosphere of peace and respect in our classrooms and atria from the start. We make every effort to take time in the beginning of each session to focus our hearts and minds on the time we have with Christ. In addition, we must adhere to the Diocesan Code of Behavior for all students. These guidelines help facilitate a positive learning environment.

### Diocesan Code of Behavior

1. Students must stay and participate in the entire event. Students may not leave the premises unless accompanied by a teacher, leader, parent or legal guardian.
2. The possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or weapons of any kind is not permitted.
3. Foul language is not tolerated.
4. Participants must heed any and all directions of staff.
5. Participants must respect the rights and property of others. Damage to or defacing of property or theft will be the financial responsibility of the participants involved and the participant's parents/legal guardians.
6. Bullying or harassment of any kind on parish grounds or at an off-site parish activity by a student or staff member will not be tolerated.
7. Failure to abide by this Code of Behavior may result in a request to parents/legal guardians, to transport offending participant from the premises, and the parents/legal guardians shall immediately comply with the request.

Please know that any discipline issues will be communicated to you immediately. In addition, we request that you share any information that may help us to better understand your child and their behavioral needs.

## **SAFETY**

In the interest of the children's safety, we lock the exterior school doors during PSR class time. Students entering late (or parents coming early) will need to be "buzzed in" at the front door. Students who need to leave class early, must be escorted out by a parent/guardian or an individual previously given parental authorization to sign out a student.

Emergency access to the building must be available at all times. So that emergency vehicles can quickly and easily enter the building should the need occur, families and staff members are asked NOT to park or idle in the circular drive immediately in front of the school. We ask that you please park all cars in the main lot when coming and going to PSR classes.

In support of our parish commitment to the safety and well-being of all the children we serve, our PSR students will participate in emergency evacuation procedures (i.e., fire drill, tornado drill, and lock-down procedures).



# SAINT CECILIA CHURCH PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS

It is expected that families enrolling children in the religious education classes in our parish actively seek the Catholic sacraments for their children. All Sacramental policies are at the discretion of the Pastor. More details regarding the policies of receiving the Sacraments at St. Cecilia can be found on the parish website ([www.saintceciliachurch.org](http://www.saintceciliachurch.org)). Preparation programs offered here in the parish include the following:

## **I. Baptism**

*Infant Baptism:* Classes for expectant or new parents are held each month. The classes are announced in the Sunday bulletin, or you may access the schedule for the current year on the parish website ([www.saintceciliachurch.org](http://www.saintceciliachurch.org)). The class is free and open to any family registered in the parish, but pre-registration is required for the sessions. Please call the Parish Office at 878-5353 on weekdays 9:00am – 4:00pm to register.

*Older Children Baptism:* For families with children in third grade or above who have not been baptized, or were baptized in a different Christian faith, there is a series of classes offered each summer to prepare the child for receiving his/her Sacraments. At the end of the program, the child will receive all Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, & Confirmation) in accordance with Canon Law.

## **II. First Reconciliation and First Eucharist.**

The traditional preparation program for the first celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are given when a child is in the second grade (at least 7 years of age). Since the preparation for these sacraments is a two-year formation process, all children must have completed first grade religion classes before entering second grade.

For families with children in the third grade or above who have been baptized, but have not yet received their first Eucharist, there is a series of classes offered each summer to prepare the child for receiving his/her Sacraments. More information on the Religious Education Summer Sacrament program is available on request.

## **III. Confirmation**

The Sacrament of Confirmation is generally celebrated in the eighth grade in the Diocese of Columbus. For children who have already been baptized and received their First Eucharist in the second grade, Confirmation occurs in the eighth grade at St. Cecilia. To enroll in eighth grade PSR and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, a student should have attended seventh grade Catholic religious instruction. Information on Service Hours, Sponsors, and other facets of the program are given to the students as they begin their eighth grade year.

# **PSR Family Handbook Acknowledgement**

**Please sign and return this page, acknowledging you have read and understand the policies of the Parish School of Religion program. One form is required for each family.**

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**Parent's Signature**

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**Date Signed**

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**Student(s) Name(s)**